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## **A2.31 Predation Management**

*Effective: 9/14/01*

### **ARIZONA GAME AND FISH COMMISSION PREDATION MANAGEMENT POLICY**

**Purpose:** The Arizona Game and Fish Commission (Commission) recognizes predation management to be a valuable and legitimate wildlife management tool. The Commission is aware of the diverse public opinions concerning predation issues and recognizes the need to increase public education and understanding of predation management; including the effects of not managing predators. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for implementing site-specific mountain lion and coyote management through sound biological practices with public involvement. Bears were specifically excluded from this policy as their more diverse diet reduces their impacts on other wildlife species.

The Commission appreciates the role of predators in Arizona's ecosystems. Actions by the Arizona Game and Fish Department (Department) should be based on the best available scientific information. Mountain lions and coyotes will be managed to ensure their future ecological, intrinsic, scientific, educational, and recreational values, to minimize conflicts with humans, and to minimize adverse impacts on other wildlife populations.

The Department will develop site-specific management plans when either of these two species is considered to be inhibiting the ability of the Department to attain management goals and objectives for other wildlife species. Statewide management goals and objectives can be found in the Department's Strategic Planning document. Additionally, management goals and objectives for predator control areas will be identified in site-specific management plans.

**Implementation:** Site-specific management plans will be consistent with the management goals and objectives for the predator species involved, other species, the habitat, and other biological, social, and legal constraints. This policy does not supercede existing livestock depredation procedures nor the Department's normal hunt recommendation process. Threats to human health and safety will be handled in accordance with the Department's wildlife/human interaction policies.

Management actions to reduce mountain lion or coyote predation will be:

1. Confined to site-specific areas.

2. Directed toward offending animals or populations.
3. Initiated after approval of a site-specific management plan.

Mountain lion and coyote management may occur in, but is not limited to, the following circumstances:

1. In site-specific areas where introductions or transplants of vulnerable wildlife species (e.g., bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, or special status species) has occurred or is imminent. Management actions should be intensive and of sufficient duration and frequency to allow transplanted animals and their progeny to become established and self-sustaining.
2. Where wildlife populations are below management objectives and where there is evidence that predation may be a factor.

Site-specific management plans should consider the feasibility of non-lethal methods. The Department will promote habitat management activities on public and private lands that could limit predator impacts.

Once the decision has been made that mountain lion or coyote removal is necessary, the following methods should be considered:

1. Licensed and permitted hunters or trappers may take mountain lions or coyotes during established seasons. Commission rules and regulations may be modified to promote an increased sport harvest.
2. Department-designated individuals may remove a specified number of mountain lions or coyotes in site-specific areas where wildlife concerns have been identified. This action may include the use of aerial gunning.
3. Department personnel may remove a specified number of mountain lions and coyotes in site-specific areas where wildlife concerns have been identified.

Site-specific management plans will be developed under the direction of the appropriate Regional Supervisor and reviewed by the Game, Information, and Habitat Branch Chiefs. These plans must be approved by the Director.

Site-specific management plans will provide the following: statement of need, description of area, management goals, strategies and management actions, intensity and duration of the action, measurable objectives, an environmental assessment checklist, and a public outreach plan.